



Annual Report of
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Activities for the
THE TOWN OF MILFORD
~ 2011 ~

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission is formed by the thirteen communities of Milford, Hudson, Pelham, Litchfield, Merrimack, Nashua, Amherst, Hollis, Brookline, Mont Vernon, Lyndeborough, Wilton, and Mason. NRPC serves as a resource to support and enhance local planning, provides a forum for communities to coordinate land use, environmental and transportation planning at the regional level, and provides a clear voice for the region at the state and federal levels. Our core planning programs are transportation, land use, environment, and mapping. NRPC is also the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region and is responsible for developing and maintaining the region's official transportation planning program for transportation projects that are funded through Federal or State sources.

In 2011, NRPC provided the assistance summarized below directly to Town Departments, land use boards and commissions, and the Board of Selectmen. Town officials, staff and board members also have access to the many training and educational programs NRPC offers and may request customized services through NRPC programs.

TRANSPORTATION

NRPC is responsible for developing the region's portion of the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), maintaining the regional traffic model, and performing required air quality analyses. In addition, NRPC MPO funds are used to provide municipal technical assistance on transportation issues.

Congestion Management Process – The NRPC has developed a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) designed to identify areas of congestion and develop solutions for more effective management of the transportation system. This plan provides information to municipal decision makers to assess the effectiveness of strategies and identify investment priorities. In 2011, NRPC collected travel time data on NH 101A which will be used to support prioritization of transportation improvements in the region.

Traffic Data Collection – NRPC completed traffic counts throughout the region including within the Town of Milford to support the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). All traffic counts are available for use by the Town and NRPC can conduct special counts upon request. The count data is available to anyone through the NRPC website using the Google Maps feature and more detailed data from each count is available upon request.

Staff also provided data for the update of the Transportation chapter of the Town of Milford Master Plan, including:

- Conducted turning movement counts at 3 intersections and developed the associated existing Level of Service (LOS) for those intersections.
- Developed table that shows existing LOS for 3 intersections.
- Used NRPC traffic model to forecast future level of service; developed table that shows future LOS for those intersections.
- Used NRPC traffic model to estimate future traffic volume at key locations; developed maps and table to show existing and future traffic volumes.

Transportation Improvement Program – As the designated MPO for the region, NRPC maintains the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a document required under federal transportation regulations that shows that there are sufficient resources to fund the proposed projects. All federally funded highway improvements must be included in the region's TIP in order to receive federal funding.

NRPC is responsible for the development and maintenance of the TIP so that federal highway transportation dollars are available to Milford and the rest of the region. Throughout 2011, NRPC carefully monitored the status of Milford projects in the TIP to ensure that project information and changes initiated by NHDOT were communicated to the Town planning and community development staff. Specific projects which NRPC monitored include: safety improvements on NH 101, intersection improvements on 101A, the Milford Oval and South Street improvement projects, and signal modifications and improvements at the intersection of NH 13 with Emerson Road and Armory Road.

Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Program - The CMAQ program provides funding opportunities for communities to address transportation needs that have a direct and beneficial impact on air quality in the region. NRPC assisted town staff with a successful CMAQ application grant to acquire funding for the previously mentioned signal modifications and improvements at the intersection of NH 13 with Emerson Road and Armory Road. Throughout 2011 NRPC continued to support town of Milford staff by monitoring the project to ensure expeditious and efficient implementation.

Road Inventory – During 2011, NRPC staff prepared the updated data in the Town Road Inventory. This data set allows officials from the Town and NH DOT to have the most up to date information on Milford's roads and will be used for planning road improvements in the community. This data also forms the basis for the Town's allocation of Transportation Block Aid from the State.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – During 2011, NRPC began a major update to the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The purpose of this document is to identify the long term transportation needs of the region. It provides a mechanism for the communities of the region to have a voice in the transportation planning process and decisions. NRPC staff worked closely with Town of Milford staff to identify local transportation improvements that benefit the Town. Including these projects in the MTP will provide the opportunity for future funding through the states Ten Year Plan Process.

NH Capitol Corridor Passenger Rail Project – During the course of 2010 NRPC continued to push forward the NH Capitol Corridor project. Activities this year

included participation on the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority, the operating entity for the rail project, as well as passage of a limitation on liability as well as the preparation of conceptual development and operating costs. The liability limitation will be a critical factor in controlling operating cost for the rail project.

Regional Traffic Model – NRPC is updating the regional traffic model in conjunction with the release of new U.S. Census data and regional employment and journey to work data. This update will also allow NRPC to provide morning and afternoon peak hour traffic forecasts, as well as more accurately model traffic signalization and intersection issues. This will allow NRPC to provide more specific information to the town when assessing the impact of traffic from new development. This capability is available for town use whenever there is interest, without cost, and the town staff has utilized NRPC traffic expertise on several occasions to help study critical intersections and development issues.

Population Projections – In the absence of updated projections from the NH Office of Energy and Planning State Data Center, NRPC staff have developed population projections for the Town of Milford that will aid in community planning through 2040. The projections are based upon the 2010 existing male and female population, broken down by 5 year age cohorts, and projected in 5 year increments through 2040; allowing the town to plan for its future demographic composition including school age, workforce and senior populations. Incorporated into the projection model are recent birth rates, standard survival rates, and an estimate of the future migration that considers known and anticipated future economic development, housing construction, and recent trends. Additionally, NRPC is developing similar projections for all towns in the region.

Human Service Transit Coordination –The NRPC has been the leader in the state in this process and was recognized as the first Regional Coordinating Council. In the coming years it is anticipated that this project will lead to increased transit service throughout the NRPC region and help meet the transportation needs of many seniors and disabled adults without transportation options.

Safe Routes to Schools Program - The Safe Routes program encourages children to bike or walk to school through education and incentives that remind children how much fun biking and walking can be. The program also addresses the safety concerns of parents by encouraging greater enforcement of traffic laws, exploring ways to create safer streets, and educating the public about safe biking, walking, and driving practices. NRPC continues to pursue Safe Routes to School funding for communities and school districts in the region.

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT

iTRaC Project – Building upon the Nashua and Elm Street Corridor Overlay District and Design Guidelines of 2008, the Town decided to extend the overlay district concept to another corridor in town. In the summer of 2010 the decision was made to begin developing a new set of Design Guidelines for the western portion of Elm Street from Granite Town Plaza to the Wilton Town line. In 2011 NRPC worked with the Town of Milford to assist them with this effort. The proposed West Elm Street Gateway District Design Guidelines and supporting educational materials were developed to

guide desired site designs and features along this corridor. The draft documents will be voted on in 2012.

NRPC Energy Program – In 2011, NRPC continued to provide technical assistance to increase municipal energy efficiency in the Nashua Region through the Energy Technical Assistance and Planning program (ETAP). ETAP is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and is being administered through the NH Office of Energy and Planning. Through this program, NRPC staff worked with the Town of Milford along with 10 additional towns and 6 school districts to form an aggregation for electricity supply. As a result of a successful bidding process, the Town will see a substantial savings on its municipal electricity bills.

Resources and Training – Through the innovative iTRaC (Integrating Transportation and Community Planning) program the NRPC provided a wide array of resources to town volunteers and staff. Fact sheets were developed on Transit Oriented Design, Overlay Districts, Bike and Pedestrian Planning, Performance Zoning and the Sustainability Series Overview. Two Planning Board and Zoning Board trainings were also offered and a presentation on roundabouts.

The iTRaC Program awarded the first Exemplary Spaces Awards in 2011. Awardees exhibited examples of excellent planning and design. Future awards will be granted for residential, commercial and industrial, and public spaces in the Nashua Region that exemplify the successful use of innovative planning techniques, site design, and aesthetic appeal and to recognize examples of excellent planning that enhances the community.

Household Hazardous Waste Program – Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) comes from everyday products used in the home, yard, or garden. By definition, they are corrosive, flammable, toxic, or reactive. Non-latex paint, solvents, oven cleaner, pool chemicals, pesticides, drain opener, and auto chemicals are just a few examples. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission holds HHW Collections each year to allow residents to properly dispose of these products. During these events, participants can also recycle unwanted electronics.

The Nashua Regional Solid Waste Management District held six collections during the 2011 Household Hazardous Waste season, including one in the Town of Milford. In 2011, a total of 1,032 households participated in the HHW collections District-wide; of those, 97 households came from Milford. A total of 71,348 pounds of material was collected in 2011. Milford residents comprised 9.4% of the total participation, which equates to roughly 6,707 pounds of waste removed from the waste stream.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

General Mapping and Spatial Data Maintenance - The GIS staff at NRPC continues to maintain a diverse collection of mapping information and databases including local roads, real property parcels, zoning, land use, and environmental conditions. This data is applied extensively to provide mapping and analysis for local and/or regional projects. NRPC continued its quarterly updates to the town parcels layer, using the Registry of Deeds database to update the town digital parcel map to include all changes to property data. This item is a critical component of many projects

conducted in the town and is always available to the town from NRPC free of charge. This year, 16 lots were adjusted per information gathered from the Registry, including 12 lot line adjustments and 4 new subdivided parcels. NRPC also worked with the assessing department to acquire the latest set of land use and housing data to join geographically for improved mapping and data analysis.

NRPC still provides Milford with its official zoning map, free hard and digital copies of which have been provided to the Town whenever updates are made to any of the features on the map. Other layers updated upon request or notice include roads, road names, zoning, conserved lands, and land use.

Census Data – NRPC collected and synthesized hundreds of datasets from the 2010 U.S. Census and the ongoing American Community Survey estimate program. Data is available at several geographic levels, from the State and Town all the way down to small Census Blocks. NRPC has presented local and regional data at several meetings throughout the year and even created an online tutorial on how to access even more data using American Fact Finder, the Census’s official website. This data has been, and will continue to be, extremely important in planning efforts and decision making for Milford. Updated numbers in categories such as population, race, language, employment, and housing can now be used in local plans, and will be the inputs to the updated travel demand model.

Broadband Mapping – NRPC provided data collection support to the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program. Tasks in the Town of Milford included collection of broadband information from “community anchor institutions” – schools, town facilities, medical facilities, etc – and sending them to UNH for inclusion in statewide maps which help show where any service is lacking, or where better service is needed.

NRPC also took the lead on the rural addressing project, which will map every household in a rural census block throughout the state. NRPC began organizing this project in 2011, analyzing where points will need to be collected, including 1 qualifying block in Milford.

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